



**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Public Instruction**  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

**\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\***

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## Quality library media programs provide valuable instructional support

MADISON—New research, commissioned by the Department of Public Instruction, shows that school library media programs are an important instructional support for student academic achievement.

EGS Research and Consulting of Austin, Texas, conducted the three-part Wisconsin study between May and November of 2005. The research consisted of an on-line survey completed by 855 library media specialists, which is 78.9 percent of the state's certified library media specialists; a student-teacher survey completed by 107 teachers and 3,957 students in 51 randomly selected schools; and case studies of best practices in five schools. Major findings were

- Library media program staff, both certified library media specialists and aides, are the most critical component of a quality library media program. Programs made their most valuable contributions to student learning when they had full-time professional and support staff, had the library media specialist serving the dual role of teacher and librarian, and had the library media specialist functioning in the school as a teaching faculty member.
- Both teachers and students viewed the school library as a central and vital component of the school's instructional program. They reported the school library media specialist helps students acquire technology and informational literacy skills that apply both in and outside of school, contributing to students' academic achievement. The school library media program also provides a venue for reading a variety of materials that contribute to the development of students as lifelong learners.
- Library media programs that exhibited best practices had one certified professional library media specialist, a library aide or aides, support from volunteers, and staffing that increased with higher school enrollments. The five programs in the case studies were highly visible, with the media center described as the heart of the school. The programs had strong administrative support. The library media specialists worked productively with teachers and students, had a depth of knowledge of state standards and curriculum and instruction, served as change agents to discover new and collaborative ways to enhance curriculum, fulfilled the role of teacher-librarian, and were leaders for technology integration.

(more)

The research further described library media programs as having an impact on student achievement. Principals, teachers, library media specialists, and students recognized the connection between student achievement and the skills and knowledge they derive from the library media programs. The programs gave students research and information technology tools and skills that they could use in all content areas, developed their critical thinking abilities, and opened students to the wide range of resources and information, increasing their interest in reading and deepening their excitement for learning.

“All too often, school library media programs and the professionals that staff the library are the target for spending cuts,” said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. “As we work to raise achievement for all students and close the achievement gap, we now have proof that school library media programs support teaching and contribute to students’ academic learning.”

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**NOTE:** Additional information about the three reports from the study on Wisconsin Library Media Centers is available from Kate Bugher, (608) 267-9287, < [kathryn.bugher@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:kathryn.bugher@dpi.state.wi.us) >.